

**Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)**  
**November 17, 2006 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
**The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Yankee Hill Room**  
**Lincoln, Nebraska**

Ruth Miller, vice-chair, opened the meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council on November 17, 2006 at 11:15 a.m. at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska.

*Members present:* Ruth Miller, acting chair; Kathy Anderson, Michelle Bartlett, Kim Chase, Marcia Corr, Mary Fran Flood, Kathy Halverson-Rigatuso, Mary Jo Iwan, Barbara Jackson, Marjorie Kostelnik, Susan Kringle, Terri Lewis, Sali Lindenberger, Kim Madsen, Betty Medinger, Mary Phillips, Roger Reikofski, Barbara Schliesser, Joyce Thomas, Derek Weimer, Carey Winkler, Linda Zinke

*Members absent:* Susan Adams, Mary A Frank, Christine Carr, Eric Dunning, Kris Elmshaeuser, LeaAnn Johnson, Paul Matson, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Mary Alice Queen, Todd Reckling, Dianna Schimek, Connie Shonka, Carolyn Witte

*Also in attendance:*

*Technical Assistants:* Rae Anderson, *National Child Care Information Center*; Nina Baker, *PTI-Nebraska*; Betty Lammle, *CCDF Regional Representative*; Carol Fichter, Carol Puffer, *Early Childhood Training Center*; Denise Wright, *ESU #13*; Pam Youngblood, *Administration for Children & Families*; *HHSS*—Lynne Brehm, Shirley Pickens-White, Linda Shandera; *NDE*—Pat Frost, Melody Hobson, Joan Luebbers; *ECICC Staff:* Terry Rohren, facilitator; Susan Dahm, secretary, Martha Gadberry, facilitator-GBC.

**AGENDA:**

**I. Opening and Announcements:**

- Ruth Miller informed the membership about changes in the Open Meetings law and requirements for a roll-call vote, when necessary.
- *Action*—Approval of minutes:
  - Motion, seconded: To approve the ECICC minutes of August 25, 2006, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet. There was no discussion. The motion to approve the minutes passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions.
- Ruth noted that new members to the Council should be appointed in time for the February 16, 2007 meeting.
- Actions since the last meeting:
  - A draft of the ECICC 2006 Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood was provided to ECICC members.
  - A special topics conference call was held on October 30, 2006 to discuss “highly qualified” exam teacher certification.
  - The Steering Committee researched options for holding an ECICC meeting outside of Lincoln. The May meeting location has tentatively been set for North Platte. The Steering Committee also reviewed suggested options for restructuring the agenda and decided to try the current meeting schedule for two meetings and then ask for members’ evaluations of the change.
- There were no corrections or additions to the agenda.

## II. Update on the Part C Family Survey and the APR

Barb Schliesser reported on the status of the Part C family survey, which had a return rate of 48%. Data from the survey will be reported to OSEP (federal Office of Special Education Programs) as part of the Part C Annual Performance Report (APR). Barb noted that a different family survey is being conducted with families of children with disabilities ages 3-21. Other issues related to the APR include public reporting of data and updating the State Performance Plan with revised or new improvement activities. On November 15, 2006, a group of Part C stakeholders, including members of ECICC, reviewed a draft of Part C APR indicators and provided input. The ECICC chair will sign the APR before it is submitted to OSEP on February 1, 2007. Council members will receive a copy.

## III. Amendment 5

Marcia Corr announced the passage of Amendment 5 in November, which will set up the Early Childhood Endowment Fund. A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been sent out and a review panel formed. The selected endowment provider will be presented to the State Board of Education in December for approval. The process must be completed by December 31, 2006. This action triggers the formation of a Board of Trustees and the beginning of funding comprised of interest from \$40 million of public funds and \$20 million in private money, which is to be raised within 5 years. The Board of Trustees will make decisions about the granting process and to whom and how the funds will be distributed in harmony with the state-funded early childhood grant programs. It is anticipated that home-based services will be included in the distribution of funding. Marcia answered questions from Council members.

- Following up on a Council recommendation, Marcia also explained the dissemination plans for the *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) for Ages Three to Five* and the *ELG for Ages Birth to Three*. Principals and local board of education members have received copies of the ELG for Ages 3-5; the dissemination of ELG for birth-3 is currently underway.

## IV. Reports from Working Sessions

### A. Family Leadership Team

Carey Winkler reported that the Family Leadership Team had discussed SSI/Medicaid funding for families and how to encourage parents and services coordinators to become informed about access and payment for services. Mary Jo Iwan explained some of the details involved for babies hospitalized over 30 days and the issue of informing the families about the availability of SSI or Medicaid regardless of income. She said a difficulty is how to get the medical team to inform the families.

### B. Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC)

- Carey Winkler reported that the Gaps and Barriers Committee had discussed the roles and responsibilities of members and reviewed recent GBC actions taken. She also informed the Council about topics the GBC is currently discussing and updates they had received. More review is expected on the recent decline in Part C verifications to be reported in the Annual Performance Report.
- Carey reported that the GBC proposed that the ECICC add the following recommendation to the Governor's Report: [that] "Strategies be developed and implemented across the state to increase the number of infants and toddlers served by the Early Development Network."

*Action:*

Motion by Barb Schliesser, seconded by Mary Phillips: To include the recommendation of the GBC in the 2006 Report to the Governor. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions.

- *(Continuation of GBC working session report followed the Special Topics Task Force report)* Nina Baker suggested that ECICC look into information regarding clarification of Medicaid funding for in-home use (so families don't need to institutionalize child). During discussion Martha Gadberry suggested it was possible to provide a letter of neutral questions to be answered that could be submitted as neutral testimony.

*Action:*

Motion by Kim Madsen, seconded by Mary Phillips: to form a special topics work group to formulate questions and answers that could be presented at the Medicaid Reform hearings. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions. Persons interested in participating in the work group should contact Terry Rohren.

**C. Special Topics Task Force**

Marjorie Kostelnik referred members to the minutes of the Special Topics Task Force's conference call in the meeting packets. She summarized the issue and their findings regarding the elementary exam to identify "highly qualified teachers." They received clarification about the proposed exam from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and learned that the exam would only apply to those teachers certified for elementary and that the state is not saying that the exam covers the Early Childhood or Early Childhood Special Education certification. The task force determined that no further action was required except to clarify concerns to the ECICC.

**D. Finance Task Force** *(presented following lunch and public comment)*

Kim Madsen reported that the task force had not seen the most recent draft of the Economic Impact Study, so they would have no recommendations regarding decisions until after the document is reviewed. However they had discussed how to disseminate the information and link it to other initiatives. Also see: Economic Impact Study later in the agenda.

**E. Legislative & Communications Committee** *(presented following lunch and public comment)*

- Derek Weimer distributed a tentative list of 22 new legislators, cautioning that two are still undetermined. He encouraged individuals to make personal contacts with the new legislators.
- Derek also asked members to take note of the Nebraska Medicaid Reform hearing scheduled for December 11, 2006. He distributed information materials and highlighted several items related to it.
- The Legislative & Communications Committee will hold a series of conference calls to keep up with legislation occurring when the new Legislative session begins.

**\* Working Lunch**

During lunch, Michelle and John Bartlett related their family story about their son, Jake, who has 4P syndrome. They talked about their involvement in the Early Development Network, their experiences navigating the Early Intervention system, the coordination of the many services that Jake requires, and their plans for the future, which include advocating for and supporting other families of children with disabilities.

**V. Public Comment**

- Denise Wright recognized ECICC member, Derek Weimer, who was elected Scottsbluff County Attorney in the November election.
- Bette Lammle explained that fiscal 2000 appropriation bills had been extended to December 8, which applies to CCDF funding and affects many programs.
- Rae Anderson highlighted resources for early childhood found on the NCCI website.
- Betty Medinger announced the possibility of CCDF competitive funding for mental health services in which families must be included.

**VI. ECICC 2006 Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood**

- Ruth Miller asked for additions or recommendations to be included in the report to the Governor:
  - Mary Fran Flood expressed concern about the financing of mental health providers/services for children under age 5 and recommended that the ECICC become more informed about the status of early childhood mental health services for young children, which has become problematic. Others contributed to the discussion and proposed a recommendation to develop a report to the Governor around the issue of financing of Medicaid reimbursement for mental health services for young children.
  - Marcia Corr will provide updated information for Section V including new 2005-2006 data and information will clarify language about all-day kindergarten.

*Action:*

Motion by Mary Fran Flood, seconded by Linda Zinke: to accept draft of the ECICC 2006 Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood with the proposed changes. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote with no abstentions.

- Mary Jo Iwan asked for applause to recognize Terry Rohren's work on the report.
- Terry requested that corrections/updates to the report be submitted by December 1.

**VII. Economic Impact Study**

Randy Cantrell, professor from the UNL Business College, reported for Eric Thompson who was not able to attend the meeting. He provided information on the status of the draft of the Economic Impact Study and summarized some of the findings in their research study.

ECICC members expressed some concern about accuracy of some of the numbers in the draft and asked for opportunity to review the draft before it is made public. Betty Medinger clarified that it will be reviewed not only by the funders (Nebraska Children and Families Foundation) but also by ECICC members.

**VIII. Nature Education**

Carol Fichter provided information about the international Working Forum on Nature Education for Young Children that was held at the Arbor Day Farm in October. ECICC members who had attended the forum gave their reactions to the information and presented ideas for "connecting young children and families with nature" that were gleaned at the working forum. Carol shared visuals from around the world and encouraged meeting participants to go to the Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) website for more information. Carol recognized the role of various Nebraska organizations in the forum and mentioned several related activities that are planned. Persons wishing additional information should contact Carol Fichter or Marcia Corr. Carol responded to questions and comments from the group.

**IX. Child Care Center Accreditation Project**

Linda Meyers and Tracy Gordon presented information about the accreditation project offered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in which child care centers engage in self assessment to receive accreditation. The project offers three levels of support to child care center to encourage accreditation, re-accreditation, and resources to help improve and enhance programs. Linda described how NDE provides financial support and technical assistance to help the programs achieve accreditation. Support is also available from the Nebraska AEYC.

**X. Next Meeting Agenda Items**

- Economic Impact Study
- Part C Annual Performance Report
- Response to Governor's Report
- T.E.A.C.H. 5-year data (February or May meeting)
- Other—Terry Rohren requested members to inform her about other agenda items for the next meeting.

The Council adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

**Next meeting: February 16, 2007—Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln**

**MEETING HANDOUTS:**

- ✓ November 17, 2006 Roster Updates
- ✓ Minutes: Special Topics Work Group conference call, October 30, 2006
- ✓ Minutes: Steering Committee conference call, October 10, 2006
- ✓ Minutes: Gaps and Barriers Committee, August 25, 2006
- ✓ Information Report: Nebraska Medicaid Reform and Federal Budget—ECICC Legislative Committee, November 16, 2006
- ✓ List: 2007 Nebraska Legislature as of November 15, 2006
- ✓ Draft—November 13, 2006: ECICC 2006 Report to the Governor on the Status of Early Childhood
- ✓ Draft-Revision—November 16, 2006: Report to the Governor—Section VII (Child Care Licensing)
- ✓ Notice: NAEYC Accreditation Child Care Center Director's Retreat
- ✓ Brochure: Nebraska Early Childhood Care and Education Accreditation Project
- ✓ Brochure: Accreditation Project—Nebraska Association for The Education of Young Children, Inc.
- ✓ Nature Education for Young Children—Nebraska's Early Childhood Training Center
- ✓ Helping Children Learn to Love the Early Before We Ask Them to Save It: Developmentally Appropriate Nature Education for Young Children—Dimensions Education Research Foundation